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A MEMORANDUM

CONCERNING

THE CHARLESTOWN POST-OFFICE.

BY ARTHUR W. AUSTIN, P. M.

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INTRODUCTION.

The following Documents, with a few comments, are respectfully presented to the citizens of Charlestown. They having been recently called upon to express their opinions concerning the Postmaster, it seems proper to exhibit the ground of the call. And some of those engaged in the conspiracy having, with their usual regard to truth, represented that Mr. Austin had been entrapped into a belief that he had been assailed, when no complaints had been preferred at the bureau of the Postmaster-General,—he has thought it expedient to make an exposure of the plot from its origin.

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MEMORANDUM.

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On the 25th of January 1834, I received a notice from the Post-Office Department, of the following tenor, viz.

Post-Office Department, Northern Division,
21st January 1834.

Sir;—The following complaints have been made the ground of an application to the Postmaster General for a new appointment of Postmaster for the office at Charlestown, Mass.

It is stated, that such is the nature and extent of your private business, that it precludes you from discharging the duties of said office in the manner required for the accommodation of the citizens, and the safety of their property; that but little of your personal attention is given to said duties—the greater part of your time being spent in Boston in the discharge of your professional engagements; that the business is left almost entirely to the care of an assistant, a lad about thirteen years of age, and in the absence of the assistant, to such personal acquaintances as may casually stop at the office, who, in return for this service, are allowed to read such papers as may be in the office for delivery to subscribers.

It is further stated, that in consequence of the irregularities in the receipt and delivery of letters at your office, many of the citizens are unwilling to risk their correspondence through it; but prefer having their mail communications addressed to them at the Boston office.

It is also represented, that you are not courteous in your demeanour towards the citizens; and that you do not possess that spirit of activity, and the desire to accommodate, which ought to be found connected with the head of so important an office as that intrusted to your care.

Your answer is expected.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant.

S. R. HOBBIE,
Assistant Postmaster General.

To A. W. Austin, Esquire, Postmaster,
Charlestown, (Mass.) Middlesex County.

This communication was received on the 25th, and answered on the 27th of January 1834. My reply was as follows:

Charlestown Post-Office,
January 27th, 1834.

Sir,—Yours of the 21st inst. was duly received, and I proceed to reply to its contents. I will freely confess, that I am altogether surprised at the hardihood of those who could furnish such ground-

less charges against my administration of the duties of this office. I intend, by a plain tale, to convince the Department of the ignorance of the complainants in some of the particulars,—of their malice in all. But I cannot help observing, that if it had been consistent with the rules of the Department, I should have much preferred to have known my accusers. I could then have satisfactorily shown the *motives* by which they have been actuated. Accusations derive their importance from the responsibility and respectability of the accusers. In the present instance, whatever has been effected in this town, has been transacted with *profound secrecy*. No complaints of the description mentioned have ever reached the ears of my friends, nor is there any complaint in the body of this community.

I will state, here, in broad terms, that I would not consent to hold the responsible situation which I now occupy, if even a very inconsiderable number of the people declared that the appointment of any other person would promote the *public* interest. I am yet to learn that any department of our government will lend itself to the gratification of *private* malice, or will refuse its protection to an upright public officer.

I did think of examining each charge distinctly, but, upon a moment's reflection, as many of the charges are connected, I have thought best to make my reply general.

I am engaged in the profession of the law. When I first received my commission, I had an office in Boston, which I visited at 9 A. M. and closed at 1. P. M., having then in my *constant* employ a clerk or assistant who was at that time over *twenty-one* years of age. He had the misfortune to have a wooden leg, but was active and attentive to the duties of the office. *He remained in my constant employ till the 1st day of July last.* He was then promoted to a very responsible situation in the Charlestown Bank, upon my sole recommendation. He is still in my employ, and officiates, if necessary, as assistant, and holds the office of *penny-post*. During the last two years, I have merely had a desk in the office of a professional friend in Boston, and, have not argued a single cause in the Boston Courts since April 1832! I have only been at Boston between 10 A. M. and 1 P. M., and have not averaged three hours a day in Boston for two years past. I do very little business there, but go over more to learn what is going on in the city, than for any other purpose. In order that our citizens might enjoy the benefit of the great increase in the speed of the mails, from the time that the alteration went into effect last spring, till my illness in November last, I took the pains to *take over and bring back every day from* Boston our Southern Mail, *in anticipation of the Carrier*,—a fact not known to my accusers.

The first of July last, when my former assistant was promoted, I took into my employ a lad, not *thirteen*, but over *sixteen* years of age. Of that boy's care, diligence, fidelity and trustworthiness, the proofs are abundant. They are so evident in his every action, that nothing but the madness of malice could attack him. Of his capability, let my entire Quarterly Returns for the December quarter, make answer. I have hardly been able to superintend them, having been

confined to my chamber with a lingering fever for ten weeks from the first of November last. During which period Mr. Willard, my respected predecessor, and my former assistant Mr. Harris, had a general superintendence of the office.

The course in the office is daily as follows : The mail is received from Boston twice a day and regularly, except recently the carrier has a few times waited the arrival of the southern mail. The letters are sorted by me or the clerk, and the *penny post* selects those that he carries. All are entered, with the names of the persons to whom they are directed, in our memorandum book,—a practice which obtained under Mr. Willard, and which has been continued by me. The letters which remain are then put on the list. The office at this season is opened at 8 o' clock A. M., and not closed till 1 P. M. ; it is open again at 2 P. M. and not closed till 8 P. M. This is the regular course. During the whole time I have had charge of this office, with the exception of my recent illness, there have not been twenty days, that I have not been in the active superintendence of it, either in delivering letters at the window, or in making up or opening mails. Thus much for my personal care of the Charlestown Post-Office.

As to the charge that personal acquaintances have the care of this office, it is unfounded. Obviously, there can be no necessity for taxing my friends, when I provide so liberally, and not even have I given up the care of this office for an hour to either of my brothers, except at a time when one of them was sworn in while my assistant was absent. No man has read, in my office, any other papers than his *own* or *mine*, or one that I had authority to lend. No subscriber has had his paper detained one moment. Particularly since my removal to this building, a dead latch has been placed on the door, and loungers excluded. The letters are delivered at the window. The objection would seem to apply to the boy's age;—that has been incorrectly represented, and ever since he has been here, loungers or personal acquaintances have been received by me in another room.

If there are irregularities, which I deny, the blame must rest upon the servants of the Department, and not with me. All letters, newspapers, and pamphlets are brought direct from Boston by the carrier, and are delivered promptly here in office hours. All letters are despatched from this office to Boston by the first mail after they are deposited. I have not heard of a single miscarriage for the last three years, and no complaint has been made to me, that letters have not reached their destination. Within my own knowledge, persons from the north end of Boston have preferred that their letters should be addressed to this office. In most unqualified terms, then, do I pronounce the charge of irregularity maliciously false ;—with unmeasured contempt do I hear that many citizens are unwilling to trust their correspondence through this office.

As to a want of courteousness—this charge is so indefinite and vague in its nature, that I can only reply in a very general way. I have never heard an intimation of the kind before ; I have endeavored, and I believe successfully, to show a particular degree of offi-

cial courtesy to those with whom I have had professional, or municipal, or political collisions. * * * * *

In an establishment like this, the operations of which necessarily bring me in contact with individuals of every description, my chief wonder is that I have escaped so free from differences. I am confident that I have never violated the proprieties of official courtesy. I am not amenable to the Department, if in other transactions I have been the means of crushing unreasonable desires. There never existed yet an active, enterprising man, without enemies. My profession is peculiarly exposed to the enmities of a certain class of the community.

What I have performed since I came into office must declare whether I lack a spirit of activity and accommodation. Previously to the receiving my commission, (July 18, 1829,) Mr. Willard held the office, and it was kept in the second story, in a small apartment adjoining his office. After I took charge of it I retained it there for a few days, and endeavoured to find a suitable place on the first floor. I could not at that time rent a place approved of by our business men. I then fitted up, at my own expense, a room in the same building with my office, but distinct therefrom, which was admitted by every one to be a decided improvement. As soon as I was able, which happened in August, 1832, I removed to a most central and satisfactory place—next to our market house—and established it at my own expense on the first floor. I hardly need add, that the office is now as well situated for convenience and *accommodation* as *any* office in the United States. I also have, at various times, at the suggestion of the citizens, or prompted by my own sense of what was expedient, requested facilities, which the Department have cordially granted.

My promptness in despatching my quarterly returns,—in making my quarterly deposits,—the great and gradual increase of the postage under my administration,—and what I have now communicated, it appears to me is a sufficient answer to the fictitious charges of my lacking a spirit of activity and accommodation. My general courteousness, my evident and anxious disposition to attend to all the details of the office, I think must be apparent from the facts which I have stated. That there is any want of confidence in this office is certainly contradicted by the increase of revenue, and that there is no irregularity is clear, from there not having been any complaint of miscarriage for a great length of time.

The regulating principle of my life is, to do what I judge to be right, without fear, and regardless of personal consequences. I do not wish to be misunderstood;—my respect for the Department has elicited this long communication. I have no favor to ask of my accusers, or of the Department. I like simple and exact justice. I feel that I am entitled to the confidence of my fellow-citizens generally. If, upon opportunity given, I shall find myself mistaken, I shall not mourn the loss of office. I am so situated that, in a pecuniary point of view, it can be but a small loss; and I have too much *independence* to desire emolument at the expense of the *public* inter-

est.* If, however, it should be made apparent, that *interested motives* and *private malice* are the moving principles of my accusers, then I conceive it the duty of the Department to sustain me.

If there be reasons of state, which require my removal, let it be done at once. I shall scorn to complain ; but I object, however, to the fictions to which my accusers have resorted.

I respectfully request to be furnished, for my own personal use, with a copy of what is alleged, and the names of the persons complaining. In conclusion, I would further ask, whether the Department is satisfied with my answer to their communication

I have the honor to be, with much respect, yours, &c.

A. W. AUSTIN

Hon. S R. Hobbie, A. P. M. G.

I exhibited to Paul Willard, Esq. the notice of the Department. He immediately wrote the following to the Hon. Mr. Hobbie.

Charlestown, Mass. Jan. 27, 1834.

Hon. S. R Hobbie, Assistant Postmaster General.

Sir,—Mr. Austin, the Postmaster of this town, has given me the perusal of your note of the 21st instant, advising him of sundry complaints, which have been made the ground of an application to the Postmaster General, for a new appointment of Postmaster for the office at Charlestown.

I cannot refrain from expressing my indignation at the depravity and imposture developed by your communication. Having held the same office seven years, immediately preceding Mr. Austin's appointment, and having, since my resignation, been established in business, almost at the very door of the post office, and being in the constant practice of receiving and remitting large sums of money by the mail, I claim to know both how such an office should be conducted, and how this has been conducted by Mr Austin. And, with these qualifications to judge, and these opportunities to observe, I unqualifiedly pronounce all and singular the allegations referred to in your note, false and malicious. No law or usage requires more constant and faithful attention to the business of a post office than Mr. Austin has invariably bestowed upon this. He has received, and now enjoys, the general approbation and confidence of the public. There is not, to my knowledge, a whisper of disaffection in the community. His accusers have moved in darkness, and their plots and plans are shrowded in midnight. Let them stand forth, and they will be covered with shame and confusion.

The only interest I have in this subject is that which an early and consistent friend of the administration must feel, at seeing a colaborer, able and faithful in the cause, clandestinely marked for sacrifice by pretended friends, and assassins. I should most sincerely deprecate the ridicule and mortification which would attend the success of this intrigue.

* I have always intended to administer the office on a liberal foundation. The whole amount realized by me up to July, 1834, was $1,325 10, or an average of $265 02 per annum.

The occasion of this letter gives me new cause to regret, that when I was at Washington, a year ago last May, as a delegate to the Baltimore Republican Convention from this Congressional District, your absence from the city prevented my making your acquaintance ; but your colleague, Col. Gardner, to whom I had the pleasure of being introduced, and of whose polite attentions I have a lively recollection, will inform you that this comes from no equivocal source.

I am, Sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

PAUL WILLARD.

The interest that Mr. Willard took in this matter, and the fact that he had a just and proper influence at Washington, became known to the conspirators.

He had put a *veto* on their machinations. It therefore became an object with them to throw suspicion upon his political course, and thereby diminish his political power. Hence the falsehoods relative to that gentleman *here*—hence the attacks which have been made upon him in the 'Lowell Patriot' by the miscreant, Case.

I also wrote to a friend at Washington, under date of 27th January, calling his attention to my affairs ; and give an extract from the letter, which will show that I was right in my conjectures as to the source from whence the complainants received encouragement.

'I have no doubt that the Boston Junto are at the bottom of this business. I took the office originally to disappoint them. That is the only reason I wish to retain it. They are at war with every man who does not admit their political honesty. I have distrusted their political fidelity—and have ever openly declared that distrust. The high-minded and honorable friends of the Administration in this quarter, for years have had to endure the mortification, and to bear the odium excited by their dishonesty. If it is necessary that I should be sacrificed to their animosity—let it be so. But the individuals to whom I allude, will think their revenge incomplete unless they can couple my loss of office with the loss of reputation :—I defy them and their slanders.'

I received under date of Feb. 4th, 1834, a line from the friend to whom the above was addressed, assuring me that all was satisfactorily arranged. The influence of that friend is still in the ascendant—and will be when the Statesman interest is overthrown.

A regular conspiracy will be exposed in the following pages, encouraged by David Henshaw and John K. Simpson, assisted by E. Case, of Lowell,—who is understood to be the bought and paid-for tool of these political cut-throats.

The notice of the Department, caused me to look round to satisfy myself who had been forward in complaining. I was aware, that a system of espionage was kept upon me and the office. Some months previous to the Notice, a friend observed that Philander Ames was very frequently lurking about the Post Office, out of office hours, and sometimes endeavoring to excite a clamor because the office was not open. This fact was mentioned to me at the time, and I frequently saw him afterwards skulking about in the same way. I soon determined, in my own mind, who were secretly leagued in the

intended mischief. I knew very well, from their general character, that they were just fit to attack the reputation and standing of a townsman, if their proceedings could be veiled in the darkness of midnight. They could wield a poisoned dagger, if their hands could be concealed. I received hints from time to time that they were still endeavoring to undermine me. And the latter part of March last, received direct information that they were continually annoying the Post Office Department, and that their documents had accumulated to a very considerable extent. I was unwilling any longer to be the subject of plots; especially as I found they had already, by their falsehoods, persuaded some of our respectable citizens that I was much distrusted in my official relations by the business men of the town. Accordingly, with a view of ascertaining whether such great dissatisfaction existed, my friends called upon the citizens for an expression of their opinions, and forthwith obtained a most triumphant refutation of the slanders of the conspirators. Armed with this expression, and several other documents that will be mentioned hereafter, I proceeded to Washington, and was there received in a manner gratifying to myself, and highly honorable to the officers of the Government. The complaints and representations were submitted to my perusal. I am enabled to give the following summary of the principal documents; and having given them in the order of their dates, will then make such comments as my limits will allow.

No. 1.—The substance of the document which bears the earliest date, *August* 13, 1833, is given in the notice sent by the Department. It is a long paper, and very insidiously sets forth that the mismanagement is so great, that the complainants thought it must be apparent to the Post Office Agent, who had shortly before visited New England, and that they should be saved the trouble of complaining; representing that there was great dissatisfaction, and that the *revenue* would be increased by a new appointment. Accompanying this paper, was a letter from Hamilton Davidson to the Hon. Gayton P. Osgood, representing that a change would be agreeable to, and was called for by the democracy, and recommending William Sawyer for the *vacancy*. It was also stated that a letter would be addressed to Mr. Osgood by *David Henshaw*, endorsing the respectability of the complainants. The original complainants were,—Hamilton Davidson, Abijah Goodridge, Timo. Thompson, Jr., Charles Thompson, and Philander Ames.

No. 2,—Is dated *February* 6, 1834, and pretends to represent a Town Committee, consisting of the following persons,—Charles Thompson, J. L. Taggard, James B. Tamplin, Jno. B. McAlvin, Samuel Poor, Charles Poor, and Selden Crockett. These gentlemen recommend Mr. William Sawyer as Postmaster of Charlestown, refer to the complaints abovementioned, and speak in the name of Town and County.

No. 3,—Is a statement or certificate of James Swan, a schoolmaster in this town, under date of *15th March*, 1834. He certifies that he was put to inconvenience on one or two occasions by his name being improperly put on the list of letters, and not taken off in season,—that he had seen the Clerk in the office playing cards, and

that he had no hostile feelings towards Mr. Austin, but that he disliked such management.

No. 4,—Is a statement by Mr. Crockett, *in William Sawyer's handwriting*, of the miscarriage of a valuable letter in the spring of 1830, over five years ago. This statement is dated *March 16th*, 1834.

No. 5.—Mr. Samuel Poor, under date of *March 21st*, 1834, certifies that he is *ready* to swear that the Office was left, he does not say when, in charge of persons not clerks—he further certifies that he *thinks* that he has had charge of it. This document is also in *Sawyer's handwriting*.

No. 6,—Is the Certificate of John Mitchell, (*in "Squire" Sawyer's handwriting*) that he was mail carrier and had access to the Office for three years, and that John Harris, 2d, (the clerk) opened the Mail Bag, and that when he went to the Post Office he did not see A. W. Austin there very often. *Dated April 4th*, 1834.

No. 7,—Is a Certificate of Mr. Charles Thompson, in which he complains that Mr. Austin was ungentlemanly in his intercourse with the Directors of the News Room, and he signs the complaint as Secretary of Directors at the time complained of. *Dated 8th April*, 1834.

No. 8,—Is a letter in the handwriting of Jesse E. Dow, addressed to the P. M. General, representing that A. W. Austin is not at the Post Office one day in the week—that he boasts that he can *gum* the P. M. General into any thing—that he proclaims that he holds the office in spite of the people of Charlestown, and that he will hold it, in spite of Middlesex County and all New England. The letter recommends Abijah Goodridge, Esquire, or Wm. Sawyer, Esquire, for the vacancy, and represents that A. W. Austin is the worst person that the P. M. General could pick out in the whole town.—Stating that A. W. Austin is a federalist of the worst kind—that his management is so bad that it must be brought to the notice of the President, if A. W. Austin is not removed upon the documents submitted.

No. 9,—Is a document under date of *December 9th*, 1834, signed by H. Davidson, A. Goodridge, Chas. Thompson, Philander Ames, William Sawyer, Selden Crockett, Solomon Parsons, John Colburn, Jno. Gregory, Phineas Stone, and J. F. Boyd, pretending to speak as a Town Committee, and recommending a removal of A. W. Austin. This document speaks very strongly, and states that those they represent 'call loudly' for a change of Postmaster, and that no confidence had been put in A. W. Austin for two years.

No. 10,—Is signed by the same individuals, except William Sawyer omits his signature. It represents that the democracy of Town and County demands the removal of A. W. Austin—recommends Sawyer as Postmaster strenuously, and pretends that he is deserving, and that his appointment would gratify the public. It is dated *December 9th*, 1834.

No. 11,—Is a document pretending to represent the official act of the County Committee, signed by Joseph W. Mansur, and J. M. Read, the first of Lowell, and the other said to live in Chelmsford.

It recommends a removal of A. W. Austin—claims to represent the voice of the democracy of Middlesex—recommends Sawyer for Postmaster of Charlestown, and pretends that this recommendation &c. is the result of investigation. It is dated *December 9th*, 1834, and appears to be in the hand-writing of Eliphalet Case,—with a memorandum that Sawyer is the other member of the County Committee himself, and therefore does not sign.

No. 12,—Is a letter from Jno. K. Simpson, of Boston, in which Sawyer is strongly recommended for Postmaster of Charlestown, and is represented as a *man of talent and character*. *Dated 20th December*, 1834.

Thus has been given a synopsis of twelve different papers, by which the Department were annoyed, and which they found accumulating on their hands from the *13th of August* 1833 till the *20th of December*, 1834. I have italicised the dates as they become important. In the *fall of* 1833, in the *spring of* 1834 and in *December*, 1834, it will be observed the conspirators were at work. With regard to the complaints themselves, a few remarks upon the leading individuals concerned in the conspiracy, and their motives, cannot be misplaced. The original conspirators, were Hamilton Davidson, Abijah Goodridge, Timothy Thompson Jr, Charles Thompson, and Philander Ames. From the letter of H. Davidson to Hon. Gayton P. Osgood, it appears that Mr. Henshaw was also in the secret. Mark his cowardice. He does not dare to put on file a letter denouncing me. But Davidson's letter shows that Henshaw writes to Mr. Osgood a private letter. That is to say, he undertakes to endorse the plotters, so that Mr. Osgood can urge their representations. Mr. Osgood did not fall into the snare,—I am happy to state that the course he pursued was worthy of his station, and was consistent with his general character as an honourable and high-minded man.

If these charges were not true, the public will naturally ask why were they preferred. And in order to reply to so fair an inquiry, it will be necessary to trouble the reader with something of detail. A charter was obtained for the Charlestown Bank in the Spring of 1832. When the time arrived for organizing the Institution, it became apparent that Hamilton Davidson was determined to obtain the Presidency, with a board of Directors subservient to his views. The stockholders became alarmed. Consultations were held. The result was an understanding that Mr. Davidson's plans must be defeated. Abijah Goodridge particularly exhibited timidity. He was largely interested, and threatened to throw up his stock—repeatedly declaring that the election of Davidson would ruin the institution in the public estimation. This was the universal feeling. I was selected by those interested, to obtain proxies from those who would not probably attend the choice of officers. Such was the excitement among the stockholders, that I received a majority of the whole votes, with instructions from all quarters, some of them written, explicitly directing me to resist the designs of Davidson.—Even after Mr. Davidson was told that no earthly consideration would tempt me to betray my constituents, he besought me to violate the pledges

I had given. I refused.—The designs of Hamilton Davidson were frustrated. The wishes of the stock-holders prevailed. The institution has flourished. The savings of the widow and the inheritance of the orphan were not committed to the superintendence of Hamilton Davidson. The organ of those interested in this business, becomes obnoxious to Davidson. His unreasonable desires had received a check.—His disappointment rankles. In the first evaporation of his wrath, he declared that I should be turned out of the Post-office, if it cost him $1000. He admitted the office was not of value, but it would mortify the pride of the Postmaster to be turned out. Armed with good intentions, I viewed his threats with indifference, his malice with contempt.

In November 1832, I was a candidate of the Jackson party for Representative, regularly nominated at a meeting of the party. Hamilton Davidson, assisted by Charles Thompson and Co. attempted to prevent my obtaining the full vote of the party. This attempt will appear the more malicious and ridiculous, when it is stated that such then was the disparity of parties, that there was an absolute certainty, that no candidate of the Jackson party could obtain an election ; therefore, any diminution of my vote could only be with the view of injuring my feelings. However, in spite of Mr. Davidson's great zeal and various attempts at deception, his ticket, bearing his friend Charles Thompson's name, obtained an average of 25, and I received 223 votes. Let it be remembered that this was in the November of 1832. The original complaint is dated August 13th 1833. About nine months after I had been the candidate of the party, before the political year had come round, I am assailed. David Henshaw, although he knew that I had been on the *State Committee,* on *Town Committees,* on *County Committees,* is found lending a hand at the work in his cowardly way.

In June 1833, President Jackson and a portion of his cabinet visited New England. Hamilton Davidson, probably with an expectation of obtaining an influence, made a large party, to which the President and Suite were invited. Davidson's vanity was gratified,—his hopes of revenge promoted. Elated with his supposed greatness, about two months afterwards, in the August of 1833, he begins his operations.

He who assails the character of another, involves his own in the issue. The magnificence of Mr. Davidson's present situation has not obliterated the recollection of past transactions.

What right Timothy Thompson, Jr. the uncle of William Sawyer, had to certify to unfounded charges against a public officer,—what right he had, in a *secret* underhand way, to attempt to undermine the reputation of a member of his own party, a man whom he must have known had been true to his principles from his youth up,—is left to his own sense of honesty and fair dealing to decide.

Abijah Goodridge took part against Davidson, and was an associate with me in the direction of the Bank, at the date of the complaint. At that time the intercourse between us was not broken. In the October following, he was turned out of the direction for good

cause. The others certified to what they did not know. What they said, might be true or false. Goodridge certified to what he knew to be false, malicious and groundless. He knew that I did not spend entire days at Boston. He knew that there was no public clamor.—I place upon him the brand of wilful falsehood and intentional wrong. As to Charles Thompson, the cousin, and Philander Ames, the brother-in-law of William Sawyer, no language that can be used will add to the contempt already entertained for them by the public.

We will now take up the documents intended to be auxiliary. On the *5th of February*, 1834, about the time I received information that my answer to the complaint was satisfactory, Charles Thompson, John L. Taggard, James B. Tamplin, Samuel Poor, Charles Poor, Selden Crockett, and John B. McAlvin, representing themselves as a *Town Committee*, recommended William Sawyer to the vacancy which was to be made by my removal. These illustrious individuals claim to speak the voice of the Republicans of Charlestown. The *fraud* of this whole proceeding will be apparent from the following remarks. In the fall of 1833, a town committee of three were elected for the ensuing political year. Probably not forty individuals ever knew of the existence of this *pretended* committee of seven. The first notice that some gentlemen of the party had, that there had been a meeting, was the annunciation in the Lowell paper, printed by one Case, that these individuals were chosen a town committee. They were created in a sly way, for the purpose of endorsing William Sawyer, whilst another committee of the party was in existence.

On the *15th of March*, 1834, Mr. James Swan, a school-master in this town, is much troubled about the management of the office. Mr. Swan's complaints about the list are too trivial for notice,—his statement relative to the Clerk, is a misrepresentation,—his certificate that he had no *hostile* feelings, is worse yet! It is known to many of the citizens, that Mr. John B. Wilson complained to me on oath, in my capacity of a magistrate, against said Swan, for improperly beating his daughter, a little girl about eight years of age. This, as appears by the Record, was in *November*, 1832. I was obliged, much against my inclination, to issue a warrant, and, in the course of the investigation incident thereto, became satisfied that it was my duty to impose a light fine. The child was severely beaten. The excitement among the people was great. They wished Mr. Swan more severely punished. I ask if it is not a fair inference, that Mr. Swan lent his name to the conspirators, in order to be revenged on me for a judicial act. Is it usual for gentlemen to send a notice to Washington of such trifling circumstances as their name being carelessly left on or off the List, without notice to the Postmaster of such omission? By my books, I find that the time to which Mr. Swan refers, was when it was notorious I was confined by illness. Would it not have been more consistent with honorable conduct to have notified me, if any abuse did exist? But really there was no ground for any complaint, on the part of Mr. Swan. I could not have imagined that Mr. Swan could for a moment harbor such a vindictive, reptile feeling as is exhibited in his complaint. Did Mr. Swan hope to gain favor with *Charles Thompson*, who was

one of those upon whom Mr. Swan was dependent for his living, by certifying to as much as his conscience would permit? Did *Charles Thompson* whisper in Mr. Swan's ear, that his agency in casting the arrow would never come to light? This conduct of Mr. Swan is dwelt upon; if the exercise of a judicial function in a conscientious and courteous manner, is to set such deliberate malice at work, wo be to those who hold the Magistrate's commission. Nothing can be said in palliation of such deliberate malice. If Mr. Swan was originally angry, more than a year had elapsed, and he had had sufficient time to become cool.—Mr. Swan is dismissed, with a hope that his sense of morality will be awakened, and that self-examination will convince him that his conduct has not been consistent with feelings of manliness or principles of honor. If he expects to pass his days in this community, let him not again be misled by those who in the present instance have made him a tool.

Mr. Crockett's statement, prepared in the *hand-writing of Wm. Sawyer*, relates to the miscarriage of a valuable letter over five years ago. Mr. Crockett forgets to state that I personally made every exertion to trace the missing letter. I am only responsible for the safe despatch of letters from my office; and from the fact that there has not been a miscarriage from that time to this, it might fairly be inferred that the duties of the Postmaster and his clerks had been properly discharged.

Samuel Poor also figures in *Wm. Sawyer's hand-writing*, under date of *March 21st*, 1834. This individual certifies to that of which he could have no knowledge. It would be impossible for him to know how many, or what persons, had been sworn in as clerks. The Postmaster has unlimited power in this particular. He also states, that he is ready to swear that he *thinks* the Office has been left in his charge. *Thinks!* I have inquired of my clerk, and can inform Mr. Samuel Poor that he *thinks* as wrongly in this instance, as he does in most others. The clerk *knows* that he never trusted him. I declare that I never was guilty of such imprudence.

Mr. John Mitchell next makes his appearance, in *Wm. Sawyer's hand-writing*. Mr. Mitchell certifies that during the three years he had access to the Office as Mail Carrier, Mr. Harris, the clerk in the Office, opened the Mail Bag; that he frequently goes to the Post Office and does not see me there. These certainly are matters of grave import to forward to Washington! When it is recollected that Mr. Mitchell was removed from the *penny-post* situation for unfaithfulness, it is certain evidence that the affairs of the Office were appropriately conducted, if, with his opportunities of observation and disposition to misrepresent, he cannot make out a stronger case for his friend Sawyer.

Mr. Charles Thompson takes the field in the capacity of a witness. He sets forth, under date of *April 8th*, 1834, that I had been ungentlemanly in my intercourse with the Directors of the News Room. Between four and five years ago, I had a slight difference with one of the Directors of the News Room, concerning the postage of their newspapers. We both of us at the time felt that we were in the right. With this difference I never understood that Charles Thomp-

son had any thing to do. The tenor of his certificate is to shew that he had been used improperly by me. So far from that, we never exchanged a word on the subject. Charles Thompson undertakes, three or four years after a misunderstanding, to certify in a secret way at Washington concerning it. He represents himself as Secretary of the Directors. From inquiries that I have made, I feel authorized to state, that the Directors never knew of his using that office for such a purpose, and that he was not Secretary of the News Room in April, 1834. Signing the document in said capacity, he evidently endeavors to create the impression that his use of the official signature was sanctioned, and in this way practises a double imposition; he not being Secretary at the time he uses the official style, nor had he been for two years preceding. His conduct in this whole business, is in perfect keeping with the other parts of his character. I have never had any quarrel in any shape, with this individual. I never have, and do not now feel any resentment towards him. I have allowed him heretofore, and now give him permission henceforth and forever, to defame, misrepresent, and belie me. A pity for his conceit—a contempt for his understanding—an abhorrence of his meanness—a scorn of his falsehood and hypocrisy, are the only feelings which can be entertained towards him.

We come now to Mr. Dow's epistle. It would be ridiculous to notice this trash at all, were it not that the original conspirators must be held answerable for what he says. It is evident, that although this letter proceeds from a solitary individual, yet it is part of the general plan. It was not written without the knowledge, connivance or concurrence of some of the leading conspirators. Every one will see the propriety of this position; as the letter recommends Abijah Goodridge, Esq., or Wm. Sawyer, Esq., for the *vacancy*. The gross falsehoods it sets forth, and the ridiculous charges it prefers, are part and parcel of the plan. It is unnecessary to contradict any part of the abuse; it may be proper to state, that I never held any such language as that imputed,—the whole is a fabrication, from the beginning to the end. I never had any difference with this Dow, and until the latter part of January last, I had no conception that he had assailed me. What then is the reason why Dow, and many other individuals with whom I have had no quarrel, should pursue me in this secret manner? Have hopes of *office* been held out by Wm. Sawyer and his Boston friends, to those who would help prostrate me? Was there a regular plan? Was Dow to be chief clerk—were Parsons and Colburn and sundry others to obtain *situations*? Was one to be a head mason—another head painter, &c. &c. in the Navy Yard? Have there been representations that William Sawyer had power over offices? Have not such means been used to corrupt some members of the party, who would never have dreamed of such notions themselves? If this be the case, I advise them to return to their ordinary employments.

I have a few words to say to those whom I acquit of every thing but thoughtlessness. Give up office-seeking—it is a foolish business. If you cannot be content with your employments, enter into speculation—buy up a half or a quarter of Salt River, establish a

Saline factory, you will find a demand for the article manufactured—those who have used you might claim a large supply to preserve them from putrefaction. At any rate give up the chase. William Sawyer, if he had the will, has not the power to help you. No gentle Philanders will be appointed—no *convict smugglers* will be selected to guard the revenue, although Jno. K. Simpson might recommend them as men of rare talent, for that purpose! Mr. Sawyer's object has been an office for himself; that obtained, his recent burst of patriotism would have cooled. Besides, you cannot rely upon his representations. The disturbances he has excited, the intrigues in which he has been engaged, confirm in his manhood the promise of his youth. He cannot appreciate truth. It is a misfortune, doubtless,—but it is a fact.

In the next place, we find under date of *December 9th*, 1834, a statement signed by another pretended town Committee; a machine got up in an improper and fraudulent manner, for the double purpose of disturbing me and obliging the Henshaw Junto, by certifying to falsehoods about the Hon. L. M. Parker. The infamous, false, and defamatory representations of this Committee, together with similar representations made by J. W. Mansur, Reed, and Sawyer as a county Committee, prevented Mr. Parker's re-appointment. This was in conformity to the general plan. The Boston Junto and the gang here, would both be gratified by my removal; and, if Mr. Parker's official existence could be terminated, it would gratify Simpson and Co., and might open a chance for the offices within the control of the new incumbent. The plot relative to Mr. Parker succeeded—the Postmaster of Charlestown still survives. *Tamen vivit.* Sawyer and Davidson have fulfilled their part of the contract. —David Henshaw and John K. Simpson, fulfil your part. Mr. Sawyer has not been paid his wages; he deserves *something*—pay him; or you may find it difficult to obtain tools and certificate-makers hereafter. Mr. Henshaw, you know how necessary you have heretofore found this description of persons. *Heretofore* you have *used* them—*hereafter*, you may *need* them. Pay up, Mr. Henshaw,—there is already a complaint amongst your *protege's* friends, that you keep the word of promise to the ear only.

This *fraudulent* Committee appear in documents No. 9 and 10. They all sign the first, and represent that the democracy 'calls loudly' for a change, when there were not forty individuals in the whole county of Middlesex who knew that any such matter was in contemplation.

No. 10 is a recommendation of Sawyer, signed by all this fraudulent town Committee, excepting their candidate himself. The people of Charlestown can judge of the truth or falsehood of these papers; further comment is not requisite.

We come now to the *County Committee.* It will appear by Mr. Russell's letter, hereafter given, that there are five members of the *County Committee;* that J. W. Mansur and Wm. Sawyer were the Secretaries of the Convention at which the committee was appointed,—*consequently it was their duty to have notified the members of their appointment.* It will appear by the letter of Dr. Parker, of Shirley,

that he never was notified of his appointment; and by Mr. Dike's letter, that he never had any knowledge of the papers which have been forwarded to Washington.

Mr. Mansur, of Lowell, and a Mr. Reed, of Chelmsford, pretending to have investigated the subject, and to represent the wishes of the democracy of Middlesex, recommend my removal and Sawyer's appointment. They do not state that they are merely two of the committee; but there is a memorandum attached, stating that Sawyer himself is a member of the committee;—intending to convey the impression that this paper was the official act of the committee, and that they three comprised the whole of the committee. Under these circumstances, whoever availed himself of this paper—whoever was instrumental in procuring it—was guilty of *moral forgery*. This document appears to be in Case's hand-writing; I think the honor of it, at any rate, should belong to him, as it is generally understood that this Mansur is merely his tool.

Mr. John K. Simpson brings up the rear, with a letter under date of *December 20th*, 1834. The documents of the 9th, had not effectually operated—it was found necessary to call upon *Hercules*—Mr. Simpson puts his shoulder to the wheel. Mr. Simpson is the *factotum* of David Henshaw,—*Caleb Quotem* is a fool to him; whatever Simpson does, he is allowed to do by Henshaw. If a letter of denunciation is necessary, Mr. Simpson is called upon. If it is expedient to give encouragement to several candidates for the same office, Mr. Simpson can write eulogies upon *all*. Mr. Simpson expects the Collectorship, *when Mr. Henshaw is in the Cabinet*, and will probably find his way into the Cabinet when Henshaw is President!

It will not answer for David Henshaw to figure in the business; Mr. Simpson, therefore, must direct the feathery dart at the Postmaster of Charlestown.

Lethalis arundo *non* hæret lateri.

Mr. Simpson vouches for the talent and character of Wm. Sawyer. He wants an individual removed, who was of the party even before John K. Simpson disgraced it; one who has always been faithful to his principles, when David Henshaw and his accomplices have been *calculating chances*.

There were five or six other documents on file; they consisted of confidential or private letters. I was not permitted, and did not wish to see them. Their tenor cannot be much beyond what has been exhibited.

I placed on file a large number of letters from gentlemen, in this vicinity, who are favorably known at Washington,—a Record from the United States court, showing Joseph F. Boyd, one of the fraudulent town committee, to be a *convict smuggler*,—a record of Swan's trial,—a statement of the manner of electing the *town committee* of *eleven*,—a letter from Jas. Russell, Esq., showing who the county committee were,—and the letters of Messrs. Dike and Parker, exhibiting the *fraud* of the county committee Document. In addition to the above, a Memorial from the people of Charlestown, embracing

about an equal number of each political party, bearing upwards of four hundred signatures, which speaks the following language.

To the Honorable, the Postmaster General of the United States.

We, the undersigned, citizens of Charlestown, Mass. without distinction of party ; having been informed that representations have been secretly made to the Department derogatory to the personal and official character of the Postmaster of this town ; respectfully represent, that in the opinion of the subscribers, the duties of said Postmaster are faithfully discharged, that we consider Mr. Austin as an active, accommodating, and courteous officer, that we are satisfied he performs his official duties with a disposition to accommodate the whole public ; and that those necessarily employed under him are competent and acceptable. Viewing the office as a responsible one, we remonstrate against any change as prejudicial to the public interest, and we know not of any thing in the personal or official character of Arthur W. Austin, Esq. that should cause a discontinuance of the confidence of the Department; but on the contrary we firmly believe that the public interest and convenience will be as well secured, and the honor of the government as well sustained by Mr. Austin as by any other person who could be placed in the office.

April, 1835.

This was signed by many gentlemen with whom I have had warm political and professional collisions. Men of honor, however, and they cordially bore testimony to my official fidelity.

I now proceed to give the letter of James Russell, Esquire, to which I have alluded. This letter states who were chosen a county committee.

West Cambridge, April 17th, 1835.

Arthur W. Austin, Esq.

Dear Sir,—In answer to your inquiries respecting the Democratic Republican county convention, holden at Concord in October last ; I will state, that I had the honor of being elected to preside on that occasion, and Joseph W. Mansur of Lowell, and William Sawyer of Charlestown, were chosen secretaries. At that convention, five Democratic, or Jackson candidates, were elected to be supported for the State Senate, and also a county committee for the current year, consisting of the following persons, to wit, Joseph W. Mansur of Lowell, Augustus G. Parker of Shirley, George W. Dike of Stoneham, William Sawyer of Charlestown, and a Mr. Reed of Chelmsford. This county committee, as you will perceive, are all young and most of them new men.

That your political character should have been called in question by the county committee, or any part of them, or by any one else, is to me a matter of astonishment. Who dares to say, that you have not been an early, consistent, and unwavering *democrat* ? Show me the man, who will presume to accuse you even of lukewarmness in the support of President Jackson, and the leading measures of his administration, and I will prove the falsehood upon him. Is it possible that the county committee, or any part of them, have the audac-

ity to call in question your political integrity ? I can hardly believe it. But if such has been the fact, they must have been imposed upon by some personal enemy in your town ; let them be undeceived as soon as possible. Let me tell you, sir, that you have nothing to fear from such base insinuations; your character and standing as a member of the bar of the county of Middlesex may be, and no doubt is the envy of some ; but diligence, industry, integrity and high mindedness, which I am happy to state are the component parts of your character, will enable you to triumph over your secret foes.

You are at liberty to make such use of this letter as you may think expedient.

In haste, your friend and humble servant,

JAMES RUSSELL.

The following letters from Messrs. Dike and Parker put a brand on the doings of the county committee.

Shirley Village, April 3, 1835.

Dear Sir,—Yours of March 27, is now before me. And in answer to your enquiry, If I have acted, and how, as one of the County Committee, in the attempt to remove Mr. Austin from the Post Office in Charlestown?—I must say, sir, your letter *was the first intimation I ever had of such an attempt.* I know nothing about the affair. *Neither do I know—that I am one of the said Committee.* I suspect I am not. You are at liberty to make such use of this letter as you may think proper, to counteract any impressions made upon your mind, or of others, that I have any connexion with the transaction, either directly or indirectly.—I am, sir, very respectfully yours, &c. AUGUSTUS G. PARKER.

Paul Willard, Esquire.

Stoneham, April 11th, 1835.

Dear Sir,—In reply to your questions, I will state that at the Concord Convention in October last, I was chosen a member of the Middlesex Democratic County Committee for the ensuing political year, together with Augustus G. Parker of Shirley, Mr. Reed of Chelmsford, Mr. Mansur of Lowell, and William Sawyer of Charlestown. I have never been notified so as to attend any meetings of said Committee and have not signed any papers in relation to you or Hon. Leonard M. Parker, late Naval Officer at Boston.

I have not been consulted as to you, and if consulted should have given it as my opinion that you are deserving of entire confidence in your political relations, and that your personal character is a guaranty that the affairs of the Post Office Department are in safe hands. I declare without hesitation, that I have perfect reliance in the purity and firmness of your political faith and have known you as one of the earliest and most constant friends of the present Administration. If the County Committee have made any representations in relation to either you or Mr. Parker, at Washington, I consider such doings as an outrage upon my rights as one of the Committee, and upon the rights of those whom I represent. You

are at perfect liberty to make whatever use you think fit of this communication. Yours, &c.

G. W. DIKE.

A. W. Austin, Esquire.

I laid before the Department my testimonials, which received prompt and careful examination. The following communication was the result of the investigation.

Post-Office Department,
Northern Division, April 27, 1835.

Sir,—Your reply to the complaints made against your office, of which you were some time since notified by the Department, and the testimonials submitted by you in relation to them, are considered satisfactory by the Postmaster General; and the applicants have been notified, through their candidate, that no sufficient cause is perceived for your removal from office, and the new appointment requested by them.

I am, Sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. R. HOBBIE,
Assistant Postmaster General.

To A. W. Austin, Esq. Postmaster, Charlestown, Mass.

A word as to the office I hold. I came into it fairly. I do not hold it as the reward of political partizanship. I never shall hold it on such terms. The public have dealt generously by me. I do not intend to neglect their interests. I have proceeded in this business with a view to the public benefit. I intended not my own preservation merely. That of course was my duty. I deemed it no less a duty to expose the machinery employed, the dark and devious paths pursued by political hyænas to destroy all who will not worship at their shrine. These individuals are known. Their selfish schemes, their personal plans of aggrandizement, their denunciations of all who distrust them, of all who by any possibility could cross their paths, *are known*. Their names are no longer talismans at Washington. Their influence has departed.

What is evident, it is superfluous to prove. Every sagacious reader will perceive the insignificance of the Charlestown complainants.*—In their most extravagant moments of self-exaltation, they had not the presumption to suppose their representations could effect the object desired. Encouraged and instigated by the Boston Junto, they thought success certain. In the first, they depended upon the endorsement of Henshaw. In their extremity John K. Simpson appears. The impertinent interference of the Boston office holders, and their patent machinery, which in many cases has successfully operated, is exposed.

I said, public considerations have influenced me in my course.—It is believed that other individuals, holding office in this country

* The amount of postage paid by all the complainants for a month, I find, by my books, to be one dollar and forty four cents!

under the Postmaster General, are the subjects of plots similar to the one developed. All are liable to them. It is hoped the exposure of the names of those engaged in such secret machinations will arrest these assassin-like attacks. That is one object of the present publication.

The complainants, though few in number, were so artfully arrayed in various and formidable shapes, that the Department would have been justified in believing that my longer continuance in office would be in defiance of public sentiment. Representing themselves as the organs of large portions of the people, and being endorsed as such by those holding responsible situations under the government, it was reasonable to suppose that I was acquainted with their projects.

I feel that I have been tedious. I am conscious that I owe the public some apology for the introduction of so many unimportant characters. It must be remembered, that, a *secret knot* of individuals, whose motives are not apparent to the public, can by combined and well-timed efforts materially injure, if not destroy the fairest reputation.

I have been pursued for some length of time. My course has heretofore been one of forbearance. I have been advertised in the public prints,—attempts have been made to undermine me with old friends and valued clients. I knew not the extent of the mischief. I have surveyed the attacks in silence. I have hoped that as the malice was causeless, it would cease. My astonishment at their perseverance was great. I had molested no one. I am no political adventurer. I had not entered into cabals. I had not grasped at those things that might be supposed legitimate objects of ambition. I was tranquilly pursuing the even tenor of my way—an obscure individual, desiring to live on my own side of the hedge, and to dwell in peace and quietness amongst my neighbors. This was not permitted. The twice defeated Junto appointed the third time for decapitation. The weapon was sharpened, the hand ready to inflict the blow; they supposed the *intended* victim was slumbering in false security. He awakens from apparent indifference to defend 'life's life.' His defence is successful, he prevails—he triumphs. He goes farther, he drags the assassins to the light of day—he exposes them to the public gaze—he holds them up to the scorn of a moral community.

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